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SUBJECT: GEORGIA: MAY 27 UNSC CONSULTATIONS

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Georgia SRSR Johan Verbeke told the Security Council on May 27 that a credible security regime, adhered to by all sides, needs to be the core of any future UN presence in Abkhazia, Georgia. Verbeke said that the Council's call in Res. 1866 for paragraph 2(a) of the former Moscow Agreement to be adhered to, had not been heeded. Instead, events on the ground were contributing to the erosion of the UN's effectiveness, to a lack of stability, and to safety concerns among local populations. Russian Permrep Vitaly Churkin agreed that the situation in the conflict zone was tense and said the recommendations contained in the SYG's report of May 18 could serve as the basis for terms of reference and a future mandate. Churkin also said the SYG's report incorrectly places responsibility on Russian troops for the current instability, which he believed was due to actions of the Georgian government and Georgia's domestic situation. The U.S., U.K., France, Croatia, Austria, Turkey, Mexico, Costa Rica, Japan, Burkina Faso and Uganda all supported the SYG's recommended security regime and mandate. China, Vietnam, and Libya acknowledged a need for a revised security regime, but stopped short of offering support for the recommended mandate, instead focusing on progress being made in the context of the Geneva talks. END SUMMARY.

SRSR's Report

12. (SBU) The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSR) for the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), Johan Verbeke, briefed the Security Council in closed consultations on May 27 on the situation on the ground in UNOMIG's area of operation, and on the SYG's recommendations for a revised mandate. Citing continuous erosion of the security regime that had been the basis for UNOMIG's mandate prior to the August 2008 conflict, Verbeke said a "credible security regime" needed to be the core of any future UN presence. He emphasized that the regime would have to be adhered to "by all sides", saying that the call in Resolution 1866 for the security regime of the former Moscow Agreement to be adhered to "had not been heeded". Verbeke provided an update on events in UNOMIG's area of operation since the report had been submitted, including the removal of some Russian troops whose presence had been in contradiction to the suggested limits placed by Resolution 1866 on troops in the conflict zone, and the addition of two companies of Russian Border Guards into the conflict zone.

13. (SBU) Referring to the SYG's proposed UN mandate, Verbeke identified a need to protect vulnerable populations-- "particularly, but not exclusively, ethnic Georgian populations in the Gali district and beyond." He also said that the UN could assist in the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes, and that "a strengthened UN police and human rights monitoring capacity would be useful." The SRSR suggested that the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (JIPRM) could be "expanded

over time to become a multi-layered mechanism for the conduct of confidence building measures and dialogue." (The JIPRM is not included in the SYG's recommendations. The IDP, police and human rights suggestions are in the report.)

RUSSIA

¶4. (SBU) Russian Permrep Vitaly Churkin criticized the SYG's report for being biased against Russia and for not taking into account the "new realities," but he also said the proposals for a future UN mandate could "serve as the basis for the UN terms of reference and mandate." Churkin said that the report leads the "uninformed reader" to the conclusion that the main responsibility for instability in the conflict zone lies with the Russian military presence. Instead, Churkin said, Georgia was responsible for instability in the region, including by attacking South Ossetia in August 2008. Churkin said Russia feared Georgian President Saakashvili, whom he called psychologically unstable, would seek to divert attention from Georgia's domestic situation and "massive opposition protests" by launching an attack. He said Russian forces had since been reduced, and that the Border Guards that had been introduced to Abkhazia were the result of a bilateral agreement with Abkhazia. He accused Georgia of fomenting tensions in the conflict zone by creating new border observation posts and introducing new military equipment into the area.

¶5. (SBU) Churkin made a plea to the Council to consider "long term objectives" in the region, which he characterized as normalizing the long-term conflicts between Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. He said the conflicts would not be resolved as long as Saakashvili remained in power in Georgia.

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He dismissed the calls by several Council members to respect Georgia's territorial integrity as not contributing in a meaningful way toward the dialogue on the future activities of the UN mission. Churkin also said that a "cease-fire line", as had been referred to in the SYG's report, is legitimate in a number of cases, in order to facilitate a political dialogue. However, he said, in the case of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the issue had not been resolved by political means, but instead by Georgian aggression against South Ossetia. Churkin said that the "Sarkozy-Medvedev documents" (August 12 agreement and September 8 clarification) were "not a cease-fire situation". Russia, he said, had fully implemented its August 12 obligations by withdrawing to Abkhazia. Russia's continued military presence in Abkhazia, he said, was grounded in its bilateral agreements with Abkhazia.

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo offered U.S. support for the SYG's recommended security regime, recalling the SYG's numerous citations of Russian non-respect for Resolution ¶1866. DiCarlo emphasized that "all forces, including Russian forces" needed to be subject to any future security regime. Ambassador DiCarlo also supported the recommendations for revisions to UNOMIG's mandate, and emphasized that the UN needed to be given "unfettered access" to all of the areas within its responsibility. She called for enhanced human rights monitoring and for the facilitation of the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), also emphasizing the need for unfettered access by humanitarian organizations to the separatist regions. DiCarlo emphasized U.S. support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. She called for continuation of the Geneva process, which she hoped the parties would pursue in a good faith effort to implement the August 12 cease-fire agreement and implementing measures of September 8.

¶7. (SBU) Austria, Burkina Faso, Croatia, France, Costa Rica, Japan, Mexico, Turkey and Uganda all offered their support for the SYG's recommendations for the security regime and for the revised mandate, variously citing the situation on the

ground. Austria, Croatia, France, Costa Rica, Japan, Mexico and Turkey specifically mentioned their support for Georgia's territorial integrity. All Council members mentioned their support for the Geneva process in their interventions, and several supported Verbeke's suggestion that the JIPRM could be expanded.

18. (SBU) China, Libya and Vietnam, agreed that the situation on the ground was unstable and that a new security regime needed to be put in place. They also all voiced their support for the facilitation of returns. However, they focused their comments on the role of the Geneva meetings in resolving security/stability and IDP returns, and suggested that the parties needed to work in that forum to develop solutions.

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